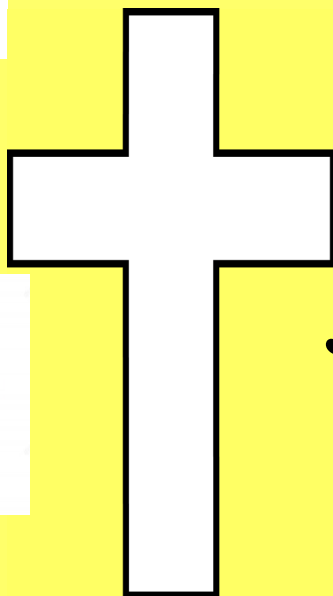


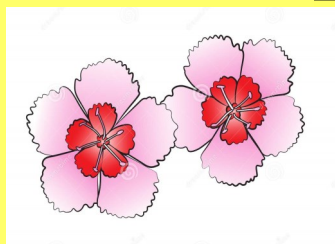
St. Alban's Earsdon

CHURCH VIEWS



July 2024

£1.00



St. John's Backworth



**Immaculate Heart of Mary,
Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea**

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

July 2024

Funny thing time, isn't it? When I was asked to contribute a Thought for the Month of June I had so much happening that I couldn't, I didn't have time. But I promised I'd have a Thought in July because last May that seemed geological age away and I'd have plenty of time. So here I am in very late June because I just ran out of time – again!

My sense of time has changed hugely over the years, probably just like yours. Days were much longer than twenty four hours when I was little. Every sunny summer day was longer than it is now, if not almost endless; every bike ride was an adventure and riding from North Shields to Whitley Bay took forever but when I got to the Spanish City the carousel and chain chair rides were over in no time at all.

As school went from primary to secondary time went weird again – the long dreary hours of revision which repeated every year always led to exams that always ended with the last answer not quite finished because there wasn't time. Much later, as a Head of Sixth Form (in old money, the title is probably much fancier now) I repeated myself constantly in the dictum not to waste time, A Levels were beckoning.

Every September my female students were amused at the time confusion, when in the first few days of the new school year the Year 7 pupils called them 'Miss', because in the eyes of those 11 year olds, those 18 year olds had to be teachers because they were so *old*.

One reason I didn't have time for much else recently was being involved in closing the church of Our Lady and St Edmund in Backworth and researching its history. The church is a lovely building, opened in 1954 - I nearly said 'only opened' - and is still light and bright, but shrinking congregations, COVID lockdowns

and spiralling costs meant it could not be sustained. In the picture I have of the foundation stone being laid of the first church on the site in 1884, there are fourteen priests and a Bishop. Later when the current church was opened by Bishop McCormack, in 1954 fifty priests entered the church in procession and five hundred people tried to squash into a building built for three hundred.

No one on that day would have envisaged it closing or saw anything astounding in having fifty priests available to attend, but even then the Bishop's warning that the church would not be consecrated until it was free of all debt must still have sounded a little odd!

Although time stretches and shrinks, we remain mercifully unaware of what the future might hold. There was a striking example of the wheel turning at the Mass of Closure last Saturday. The Mass was conducted by Stephen Wright, the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle, and the Bishop of His Majesty's Armed Forces, Paul Mason, gave the homily.

Bishop Stephen surprised the congregation when he said it was his second visit to our Lady and St Edmund's. As a new student for the priesthood in Birmingham, he had travelled north and squeezed into a back pew in July 1988 to see the ordination of Paul Mason.

Neither of them could possibly have imagined as they began their careers, one as a barrister and the other in finance, that one day they would enter the priesthood, much less find themselves as Bishops sharing a service.

Funny thing time, isn't it? Let's not waste any of it.

Gerry Latimer Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea

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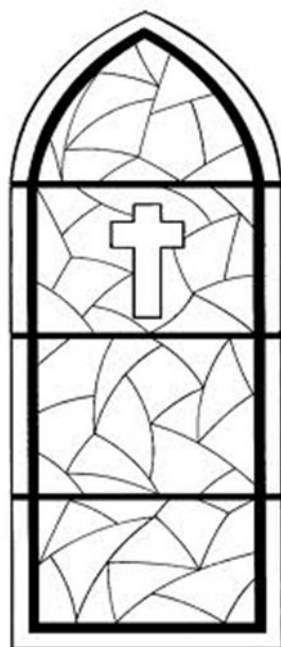


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Part **four** (and the final part) of the delightful article sent in by Ella Heaney, who also wrote the introduction.

INTRODUCTION

This article was written by a gentleman called Frank Buzzard round about 1990. He had been an accountant and when he retired, he and his wife decided to go on a pilgrimage to visit every cathedral in the country. He wrote his impression of each one and also commented on the city and surrounding area. After he died, he left his writing and £5,000 to each cathedral.

This is his account (sometimes amusing) of local Cathedrals.

What a rich history of anecdotes and tales a cathedral provides. Robert Rhodes, a local Member of Parliament, died in 1474; he is reputed to have built this lovely tower. A grateful Town Corporation provided a house in which a priest was to reside and pray for the soul of Rhodes. Wonder if any city or town Council would consider such an act in the 1990's!

It was time to rest and pray so I entered St George's Chapel. Windows of saints have had little squares inserted to bring them up to date and I found myself studying – electricity pylons – Cunard liner Mauretania – a colliery. Then I prayed.

A man writing fervently on big foolscap sheets looked up and spoke as I rose to leave the chapel. We chatted for some time, as we were alone, about the Spiritual influence of cathedrals and he said he often came to sit here to think and write. There was a radiator to keep him warm in winter and he had written a modern version of Pilgrims Progress (unpublished), composed a puzzle game for his children, and was today penning a letter to a monk, his Spiritual Advisor.

Down in the crypt of white walls and barrel shaped ceiling I found more small coloured windows (approx. one foot by two) with modern subjects – fishermen – a couple playing a musical duet – four funnelled Tyne ship and crane.

Wandered out past the castle down to the Tyne River. Glorious day to sit looking at the bridges, watching old Geordies telling their grandchildren

how it used to be. The train bridge was built in 1865 and in 1924 the Swing Bridge opened 6,000 times. Now it goes weeks without swinging. I thought of the piece of black wood in the cathedral that is claimed to be part of the Roman Bridge built by Hadrian 2,000 years ago.

So to Jarrow a few miles along the river where we explored Bede's World. It was called Monkchester in those days and no pilgrimage to this area could possibly be complete without visiting the monastery where the Venerable Bede spent his remarkable life of historic research, prayer and writing.

The museum is full of historic data with many facsimile copies of books and documents. I did not realise that Bede wrote his famous 'History of the English Church and people' entirely from information obtained from visitors, correspondence and books – he quotes copiously from other authors. Nothing first-hand for he rarely left his monastery.

A picture of Ezra in his library was fascinating; the nine books on the shelves, inside what appeared to be a cupboard, were clearly labelled. A lady was writing on vellum in the style used by ancient monks and she said it took an hour to complete a sheet of A4 size. Would take me a week!

In the monastic schools of the 7th century, seven subjects were taught – Grammar, Rhetoric, Dialects, Music, Arithmetic, Geometry and Astronomy. What, no Theology or Religion?

There is a 'mock-up' of buildings such as they might have appeared in Bede's time, stocked with a variety of animals that the monastery would have kept.

Finally, we reached the old monastic remains and the refurbished church, where the tiny window dating from 681 claims the oldest coloured glass in Europe. Wonderful to sit and contemplate Bede gazing into this small aperture, saying his well-known prayer;-

I implore you Good Jesus that as in your mercy
You have given me to drink in with delight
The words of your knowledge
Grant me one day to come to you.

Thanks for this, Ali.

Children's Church at St John's, Backworth was a bit thin on the ground in June, but everyone had a great time anyway. The theme was "What a Wonderful World" with our vicar Tim Mayfield, Barbara Golightly, Jo McEvedy, Janet Sigley and Ali Griffiths.





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At St Alban's in Earsdon, there are two people of the congregation who are also members of the Anna Chaplaincy. The main aims of the Anna Chaplaincy are

- a) Offering spiritual support to older people who are living in care homes and sheltered housing complexes, their relatives and staff who look after them.
- b) Promoting the spiritual welfare of older people in the wider community, particularly those facing challenges living independently.

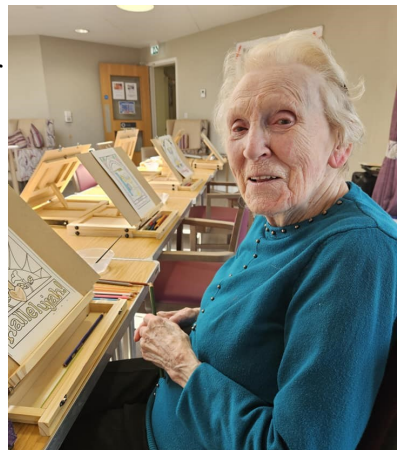
Ali Griffiths and Liz York held another of their gatherings at Havelock Place, which cares for older people who have dementia.

Ali says, "Havelock Place exceeded all our expectations on 21st June at our Prayers, Paints & Communion Service. We had 11 lovely ladies attend, Liz York started off proceedings with a prayer, then we had a reading from Luke 1:57-80 followed by a hymn. Then we had an hour of painting biblical scenes, it was amazing to see these ladies so engaged in what they were doing, very concentrated, and paying great attention to detail. Coffee break was at 11 o'clock, followed by a singalong which always goes down well, then just before we finished we gave Communion to all eleven!

I can't begin to describe how special & rewarding this Ministry is, we are very lucky to have the opportunity to engage, serve and spend time with these wonderful ladies.

Thanks again to Sheila Lucas and all her staff for accommodating us so well and giving us free reign at Havelock Place.

And as ever, THANK YOU to Liz York, Heather Griffiths and Janet Sigley for all your hard work."





CHURCH VIEWS FOR JULY 2024 FROM THE PARISH OF OUR LADY, STAR OF THE SEA



This was the first St Edmund's, known as the Iron Church, so called because of its iron framework filled in with brickwork. This is probably the laying of the foundation stone by Bishop Bewicke in 1884 just after the site had been purchased from the Duke of Northumberland's Estates. Before this, Mass was said in a disused colliery wooden shed.



The Iron Church was used until St Edmund's School was built in 1903 and Masses were moved there. This continued until April 1954 when the current church opened with Fr Tom Cunningham as its first incumbent.

The new church, renamed Our Lady and St Edmund's, was opened by Bishop McCormack, accompanied by fifty priests. 500 crammed into a building designed for 300. It continued to be a vibrant and lively parish with a great social and spiritual life.

Its last chapter happened on 22 June 2024, when the Mass of Closure and Thanksgiving was celebrated by Bishop Stephen Wright and Bishop Paul Mason. It was day for memories, and Bishop Stephen recalled how he had travelled from Birmingham as he started his studies for the priesthood to see the ordination of Fr Paul Mason.

In his homily Bishop Paul talked of his time there, from being baptised, through First Confession and Communion, his time as an altar boy arguing over who would ring the bells or open the altar rail gates. He moved on more seriously to the spiritual life of the church and his view that every place of worship spreads the love of God and remains a special place in the lives of those who carried out their ministries there. The congregation was moved to applause as his homily ended.



A new beginning



Nothing stands still, and while the closure of one of our churches is the end of a chapter in our parish history, a new chapter will open on 20 July when Joseph O'Brien will be ordained in St Mary's Cathedral.

We are delighted that he will say his first Mass in St Edward's at 10.00am on Sunday 21 July.

He has returned from the English College and at the moment is on Retreat prior to his ordination. We offer him our prayers and congratulations.

Gerry Latimer, Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea

Parish Mass Times

St Edward's: Sunday 10.00am, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday 9.30am

Immaculate Heart of Mary: Saturday 6.00pm, Wednesday, Friday 9.30am

Erdesdon House

The story of my dolls' house. By Helen Jackman

8 - The Kitchen

The Kitchen

The kitchen is situated in the basement and although it also has a bay window with (knitted!) net curtains, there is no view. It is reached by steps where the deliveries are received.

This is where the all the preparation of food takes place and cooking in the black leaded coal fired Range (I might add that my wedding cake was made in my Aunt's coal oven, in their miners cottage, in Cambois and it was delicious!)

The big brass kettle is always on the hob together with various casserole dishes. There is also a flat iron on the hearth and a mat with their cat fast asleep, appreciating the warmth. There's an oil lamp in the corner of the room next to the Range and the floor is tiled.

In the centre of the kitchen there is a big table and chairs, and this is where all the baking is done. At the minute the staff must have just had their breakfast because there are used cups and saucers left together with a loaf of bread, knife, butter and jam dishes.

On one wall there is a big Welsh Dresser decorated with pretty plates and hanging on the wall, next to the dresser, are some brass jelly moulds. They also have a Ewbank sweeper (so have I!) no vacuum in those days.

On the opposite wall, there is a big Belfast sink with the usual cleaning materials including a tin of Vim and a soap dish with green soap. Just above the door there is a servants bell. Now going into the hall there are a pair of wellingtons and a crate of drinks.

Next time unfortunately is the last episode, The Garden Room.



(Please see page 23 for more pictures.)



At a couple of recent Harvest Festivals, the people of St Alban's have given generously to support the training of farmers in Tanzania. This is a part of the world especially hit by the climate crisis. We need to do all we can to support them.

The latest report we've had was dated June 10th 2024. It concerned the training of famers in Airtight Grain Storage. This is a project to prevent much-needed grain from being eaten by termites.

When this latest report was written, farmers were harvesting millet, sorghum and maize. However, many farmers had not yet harvested. After harvesting, they will allow for enough time for these crops to sufficiently dry. Then they will be threshing, weighing and storing. All these operations, including storage, will be finished by September.

Eleven parishes so far have been mobilized and trained on Airtight Grain Storage. 288 people have been trained, alongside local artisans. These artisans will support farmers with construction of stores.

Only a few farmers so far have made bricks for their stores. This is due to the busy schedules of farmers, on fields for harvesting. However, brick making will soon quickly pick up.

Depending on the design of stores, there are those who are now digging pits, and spraying them to prevent any possibility of termites. Then they cut polythene sheets and lay out their bricks.

Recent successes have included the early start of mobilization and training of farmers, identification of artisans to support farmers with skills on construction of Airtight Grain Storage, and the purchase of materials needed in construction.

Meanwhile, challenges have included lack of time because farmers are now busy harvesting. There have also been many social ceremonies, such as weddings and funerals. Some of the parishes are too distant to reach, and in some parishes there has been poor attendance at training.

Next steps will include more mobilization and training of farmers, supervising and monitoring the making of bricks, construction of stores and actual storage of grain.



Many thanks to Rev'd Tim Mayfield for this update.

St Alban's Ramblers' group is back again for the summer, meeting every Tuesday outside the Vicarage, at 7pm. All are welcome to come and join us.

End of walk refreshments at Cox Green, 4th June:



Newburn County Park walk 25th June:



(Continued from pages 18 and 19.)



St. Alban's and St. John's

Diary Page for July 2024

Wednesday	3rd	9.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Sunday	7th		<u>Sixth after Trinity</u>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Thursday	11th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
Sunday	14th		<u>Seventh after Trinity</u>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Sunday	21st		<u>Eighth after Trinity</u>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Thursday	25th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
Sunday	28th		<u>Ninth after Trinity</u>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Wednesday	31st	No mid-week service.		
Sunday	4th Aug		<u>Tenth after Trinity</u>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's

St. Alban's and St. John's

Sunday Gospel Readings for July:

7th

Mark 6. 1-13

14th

Mark 6. 14-20

21st

Mark 6. 30-34, 53 - end

28th

John 6. 1-21

4th August

John 6. 24-35



* If you have any suggestions, comments or requests *
* regarding the magazine, or for anyone thinking of *
* sending in their contribution for publication, please *
* email it to **magazine@StAlbansEarsdon.org.uk** *
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7			2				5	
				2		8	4	
	4		3		6		1	
	7	6		5				
	6				7			3
3			5					2
		5						

Please note - all material for next month's magazine (August) will need to be in before Wednesday 24th July. Thank you.

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All in the month of July

It was:

750 years ago, on 11th July 1272 that Robert I (Robert the Bruce) was born. He was King of Scotland 1306-29.

125 years ago, on 1st July 1899 that the Gideons International was founded. The evangelical Christian association places free Bibles in hotel rooms, hospitals, schools, military bases and prisons around the world.

100 years ago, on 11th July 1924 that British sprinter Eric Liddell won the men's 400 metres gold medal at the 1924 Olympics in Paris. He preferred the 100 metres, but the heats were held on a Sunday, and he refused to run on a Sunday.

90 years ago, on 4th July 1934 that Marie Curie, Polish-born French physicist died. Twice winner of the Nobel Prize for her work on radioactivity. The first woman to win a Nobel prize.

75 years ago, on 29th July 1949 that the BBC began broadcasting regular weather forecasts on TV.

70 years ago, on 5th July 1954 that the BBC launched the first daily television news programme in the UK.

Also 70 years ago, on 21st July 1954 that the first part of J R R Tolkien's epic fantasy novel *The Lord of the Rings* was published.

65 years ago, on 25th July 1959 that the first hovercraft crossed the English Channel. The SRN-1 had been designed by British inventor Christopher Cockerell.

50 years ago, on 24th July 1974 that the US Supreme Court ordered President Richard Nixon to surrender the White House tape recordings that had been subpoenaed by the House Judiciary Committee in April. The White House released the tapes on 5th August, and Nixon resigned on 9th August, before he could be impeached.

30 years ago, on 15 July 1994, that the Rwandan genocide ended. Up to 1.1 million people were killed by the Hutu-led government and other militias between April and July.

Also 30 years ago, on 21st July 1994 that Tony Blair was elected leader of Britain's Labour Party. He became Prime Minister in 1997.

20 years ago, on 28th July 2004 that Francis Crick, British molecular biologist and biophysicist, died. He was joint winner of the 1962 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for discovering the molecular structure of DNA.

WORDSEARCH

July 2024

14th July brings us Sea Sunday, the day when Christian churches remember, pray and give thanks for the more than 1.5 million merchant seafarers worldwide. If seafarers seem irrelevant to your daily life, think again: 90 per cent of everything you buy in the shops comes to you by sea. Merchant seafarers quite literally keep our global economy afloat. Yet it is a tough life, far from loved ones. Merchant ships are harsh working environments, never mind the threat of piracy or even shipwreck.

To help the seafarers, a worldwide network of port chaplains has sprung up. They offer hospitality and friendship, as well as practical, emotional and spiritual support, providing almost a ‘home from home’ in hundreds of ports, in more than 50 countries.

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Sunday
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Pray
Give
Thanks
Merchant
Seafarers
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Shops
Economy
Afloat
Harsh
Working
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Piracy
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Port
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